

exposed to inordinate amounts of violence, sex, and vulgar language on television. Hopefully, this bill will encourage the entertainment industry to do what is right for our Nation's children, and ultimately our Nation's future.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 1997

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing legislation that will permit the city of Tulare, CA's Tulare Redevelopment Agency to end a blight in the city's downtown area. This bill will give the agency control over Federal reversionary interest in railroad rights of way bisecting the very heart of the city.

Tulare is a city of 39,772 centrally located in California, approximately 45 miles south of Fresno, and 63 miles north of Bakerfield. The city and surrounding county face the daunting prospect of trying to provide jobs in an area that has an unemployment rate of over 16 percent. If allowed to redevelop land adjacent to the rail line, Tulare's Redevelopment Agency believes that it could generate over 370 jobs in 6 years because of the agency's plan to create a retail shopping area. Adding new businesses would end local citizens' need to travel to other cities for important family needs.

Unfortunately, the city cannot gain control over the core of its downtown area without this legislation. In the last century, Congress extended rights of way to railroads in order to encourage the creation of a rail transport system. The Southern Pacific Railroad received rights for tracks and land adjacent to those tracks within what is now Tulare. Because the Federal Government has a reversionary interest in the right of way and surrounding properties, the redevelopment agency cannot obtain control of all the 12 parcels of land along the rail line that the city wishes to redevelop. The city cannot condemn the Federal interest and as a result, cannot make use of anything the community might secure from the railroad.

The railroad and its successor, Union Pacific, run over 30 trains per day through the center of the city and as a result the trackage will probably never be abandoned under the law. The railroads will continue to argue that they also control the parcels of land along side the tracks because abandonment has not occurred. These adjoining parcels that the agency needs, however, are about as barren as barren can get.

Because the Federal Government has this reversionary interest, we have about 200 feet of weeds and sand on each side of the railroad tracks today. Commercial development of small shops east of the rail line and a cotton seed mill and family homes on the other side look out on blighted property. There is a vacant gas station, a root beer stand, and a railroad storage building in the area sought by the city but that is about all. The root beer stand operates on a short-term lease. The Tulare Redevelopment Agency's plan would preserve the railroad tracks while allowing this empty space in the center of town to be turned into more productive use.

The bill I am introducing clears the path for redevelopment. First, it gives the city clear title

to one piece of property which Tulare already purchased from Southern Pacific before learning that railroad law clouded the title. Second, it gives the city the Federal reversionary interest in 11 other parcels so that the city can then deal with the railroad owner and secure the remaining properties.

It is essential that we pass this bill without modification because the redevelopment plan cannot be made to work piecemeal. Following the practices of the past and confirming title in someone who has already bought a clouded title only solves part of the city's problem. To ensure coherent development of properties along the rail corridor, the redevelopment agency has to control all 11 parcels of land so planning, marketing, and community financing of the development are possible. Giving the city title to one piece of property will deny the city resources to continue developing. Forcing the city to come back to Congress each time an interest is transferred is a waste of the city's time and ours.

I urge my colleagues to join me in moving this legislation as fast as possible. Tulare wants to take control over its own economic destiny by putting lousy land to better use. Unless this bill is enacted, Congress will be in the way of a city that badly needs our help.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL REQUESTING FAIR REPRESENTATION ON FEDERAL JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 1997

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing legislation which calls for fair representation on all Federal Judicial Circuit Court of Appeals. This legislation is a companion bill to S. 382, the Fairness in Judiciary Appointments Act of 1997. Furthermore, it is identical to H.R. 3045, which was introduced in 1996.

Currently, only the State of Hawaii does not have representation on their circuit court of appeals. In fact, it's been over 10 years since Judge Herbert Choy of Honolulu retired from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Some States like Montana have only recently had a resident granted a judgeship. My bill would require that each State have at least one judge appointed to its circuit court of appeals. That way, all States would always have representation on the bench. The bill does not affect the President's historic power to appoint Federal judges.

Having each State represented on its respective circuit courts helps ensure that justice is blind and impartial. A report entitled "The Long Range Plans for Federal Courts," completed by the Judicial Conference of the United States in December 1995, noted, "Federal judicial credibility and accountability are fostered when appellate judges are drawn primarily from the region they will serve." This bill would add to the judicial credibility of the courts, because each State would have at least one judge representing and understanding its State law, business, and customs.

This legislation is about maintaining the integrity of our third branch of government, fairness, and representation. I strongly urge my

colleagues to support this bill and press for its passage.

SENSE-OF-CONGRESS RESOLUTION TO PRESERVE THE ANCESTRY QUESTION ON THE 2000 CENSUS LONG FORM

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 1997

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce a resolution today, along with 14 of my colleagues, to express the sense of Congress that the ancestry question on the census long form should be preserved.

In crafting this legislation, I have worked closely with my friends from the Working Group on Ancestry in the U.S. Census. Together, they represent all of America. I especially want to recognize the National Italian-American Foundation and the Arab-American Institute for their work in bringing people together today.

It is critically important that we preserve the ancestry question. We aren't trying to add to the census—we just want to ensure that the ancestry question is not omitted in 2000. The Census Bureau must submit to Congress by April 1, 1997, the material to be included on the 2000 census questionnaire. Since the 1990 census, there has been much debate over the long form, and quite frankly, I am afraid some of my colleagues want to eliminate it.

The census long form—including the ancestry question—is sent to approximately one in six households. It only constitutes about 6 percent of the census budget; it is far more costly to omit these questions. It is an important source of social and economic data about our population. The decennial census is the only reliable source of information about the ethnic composition of our Nation's population.

Members of Congress depend on accurate information. The ancestry question gives us insight into our communities and ethnic constituencies. We know the value of statistics on ethnicity and the importance of maintaining a national reservoir of accurate and up-to-date information about our society's changing demographic make up. If this data is not collected in Census 2000, we will lose the only reliable and nationally comparable source of information on ethnicity. Both the private and public sectors rely on the census long form for accurate information on our population.

Those who use ancestry data include: State, county, and municipal agencies; educators and human service providers; corporations; researchers; political leaders; and Federal agencies. They need this information to ensure that programs are inclusive, representative, and serve the needs of local populations. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights needs the data to monitor discrimination based on national origin. Without the ancestry question, I fear that data on ethnicity will be incomplete or skewed.

We are a proud nation of immigrants, and the ancestry question helps us to preserve knowledge about our ethnic heritage for present policymakers and for future generations. The ancestry question provides important insights into who we are as a people, how our neighborhoods are constituted, and how